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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/14/07

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

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Prime Minister's schedule, September 13

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

10:40

Underwent checkups at Keio University Hospital in Shinano-machi, and was admitted to the hospital.

- 4) Poll: 70 PERCENT see Abe's resignation as irresponsible; 50 PERCENT urge early Diet dissolution

ASAHI (Page 1) (Abridged)
September 14, 2007

Following up Prime Minister Abe's announcement of his intention to resign, the Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey. The prime minister voiced his resignation right after his policy speech before the Diet at the offset of its current extraordinary session. Asked about this, 70 PERCENT said it was "irresponsible." Respondents were also asked when they thought the House of Representatives should be dissolved for a general election. To this question, 50 PERCENT said the Diet should be dissolved "as soon as possible," with 43 PERCENT saying there is "no need to hurry." In a previous survey taken in late July right after the election for the House of Councillors, 39 PERCENT called for dissolving the Diet at an early date, while 54 PERCENT ruled out the necessity of doing so. In the survey this time, however, the figures changed places. The prime minister has now dumped his government with no way out of the current impasse that resulted from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's rout in this summer's House of Councillors election. In response to such a situation, the survey shows an upsurge of public opinion calling for a general election.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the LDP stood at 30 PERCENT, with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) at 28 PERCENT. New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, was at 3 PERCENT. The Japanese Communist Party was at 2 PERCENT, and the Social Democratic Party (Shaminto) at 1 PERCENT. The DPJ outpaced the LDP in post-election surveys. In the survey this time, however, the LDP rose from 25 PERCENT in the last survey and topped the DPJ.

- 5) Poll: 59 PERCENT call for Diet dissolution; 43 PERCENT want DPJ to win

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Abridged)
September 14, 2007

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey on Sept. 12-13. In the survey, respondents

were asked if they thought the House of Representatives should be dissolved for a general election. In response to this question, 59 PERCENT answered "yes," with 37 PERCENT saying "no." Respondents were also asked which political party between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) they would like to see win in the next election for the House of Representatives. To this question, 43 PERCENT picked the DPJ, with 39 PERCENT opting for the LDP. As seen from these figures, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement of his resignation

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does not necessarily "resolve the situation" in his words.

6) 49 PERCENT back continuing Japan's refueling mission; Defense chief says public understanding has deepened

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

In a spot public opinion survey conducted by the Mainichi Shimbun on Sept. 12-13, opinions for continuing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean outnumbered those against it. The government and the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito welcomed the survey results. "It's a good sign," LDP Senior Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda said. Meanwhile, the leading opposition Democratic Party is poised to oppose continuing the MSDF's refueling mission regardless of changes in public opinion. However, one of the DPJ's lawmakers voiced concern, saying, "If we go too far, we may lose public support."

Referring to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement of his resignation, Defense Minister Masahiko Komura commented: "I don't know whether it was good or bad, but I think it helped the people understand that the MSDF's refueling mission is important from the aspect of Japan's national interests."

Komura yesterday met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano and Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura. In the meeting, the three confirmed that the government would create a new legislative measure allowing Japan to continue the MSDF's activities, which are limited to refueling, without Diet approval. The government will begin in earnest with the legislative process after the new prime minister comes into office.

Under such circumstances, pro-refueling opinions outnumbered anti-refueling opinions. "We will carefully explain this matter," Deputy Chief Cabinet Mitsuhide Iwaki said. "If public understanding deepens," Iwaki added, "I think there will be many more opinions (to support the MSDF's refueling mission)." There were also voices from within the Defense Ministry. "It's a happy surprise," one said. Another said, "If public understanding deepens, that will be a tailwind."

Shigeru Ishiba, former director general of the Defense Agency, now upgraded to full ministry status, was also "happy" with the survey results. Ishiba said, "Whoever may become prime minister, there's no change in Japan's way of fulfilling its international responsibility."

Meanwhile, Naoto Kan, vice president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), stressed that the trends of public opinion and his party's course of action were on different planes, saying: "President Ichiro Ozawa has clearly said it's not appropriate in principle to engage the Self-Defense Forces in such activities, rather than to say this and that about public opinion."

Meanwhile, the DPJ has noted that MSDF-supplied fuel might have been used for activities in Iraq. The government, however, rebutted such criticism from the DPJ. The government and the ruling parties-which now think the MSDF's refueling activities are obtaining public support-will likely change their usual stance of asking for (the opposition bench's) understanding to a stance of facing off with the opposition parties in the Diet. The DPJ may be pressed to show its

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policy stance differing from Kan's official view.

7) Afghan foreign minister request in letter to Machimura MSDF's continued refueling mission

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Afghanistan Ambassador to Japan Amine met Foreign Minister Machimura at the Foreign Ministry yesterday and handed to him a letter from Foreign Minister Spanta calling on Japan to continue the ongoing refueling operations by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean based on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law.

Amine said: "The continuation (of the MSDF refueling mission) is desired not only by the Afghan government but also by our people. I hope this desire is shared by the Japanese people."

8) Report on MSDF refueling mission from Indian Ocean: "We will faithfully perform our duties," says MSDF captain; Most oil going to Pakistani ships

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 26) (Abridged)
September 14, 2007

By Tokyo Shimbun senior writer Shigeru Handa, Arabian Sea

Ship-to-ship refueling by the Maritime Self-Defense Force's supply vessel Tokiwa, deployed to the Indian Ocean this past July from the MSDF Yokosuka base in Kanagawa Prefecture, was opened to the press on September 13. Due to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's abrupt announcement to step down, this might be the vessel's last tour in the Indian Ocean.

At 2:10 p.m., the Tokiwa began pumping fuel and water to a British-made Pakistani destroyer about 40 meters away from it.

Throughout the refueling process that took one and a half hours, the life vest-clad MSDF personnel were on the deck observing the operation under the scorching sun.

This is Tokiwa's fifth tour. Eighty-two persons, or about 60 PERCENT of the vessel's 132 crew members, have served in the Indian Ocean before. Captain Sugawara said: "Although safety, accuracy, and speed are essential in Japan, speed does not matter over here in the Indian Ocean. The captain of the destroyer that received fuel from us today was highly skilled, however."

Since the Tokiwa started its services on August 4, the vessel conducted ship-to-ship refueling eight times, including seven Pakistani vessels. Refined fuel has been supplied in compliance with their request. Of the eight countries taking part in the Indian Ocean operations as the Coalition of the Willing, Pakistan is the only Islamic country. As grounds for extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, the Japanese government has cited its support for Pakistan.

When did the Tokiwa crew learn of Prime Minister Abe's announcement to resign? Deck operation chief Akira Masuda, 48, said: "We learned of (Prime Minister Abe's September 12 resignation press conference) from an officer, and we were all shocked."

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Captain Yoshitaka Ojima, 47, of the command of the dispatched unit, took this view: "Although we were surprised by the unexpected news, we will faithfully perform our duties. We will not discuss this or that about our future mission for such would not do any good. We earnestly hope that the government will turn Japan into a country where children can live happily."

Due to Prime Minister Abe's abrupt decision to abandon his administration, the fate of the Antiterrorism Law is now on the line. A person connected with the MSDF indicated that this might be the MSDF's last mission in the Indian Ocean.

9) SDF joint staff chief denies allegations that MSDF fuel has been diverted for use in Iraq war

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

SDF Joint Staff Chief Admiral Takashi Saito at a press conference yesterday denied allegations that the fuel the Maritime Self-Defense Force supplied under the Antiterrorism Law to US naval vessels engaged in the Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) in the Indian Ocean has been diverted for use in the war in Iraq. Admiral Saito said: "The fuel supplied by our country has been used appropriately in line with the objectives of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law."

Admiral Saito added: "The notes exchanged with countries receiving support from Japan clearly specify: 'Refueling operations shall be conducted based on the Antiterrorism Law.' The operations have been confirmed out in the Indian Ocean." The Maritime Self-Defense Force has reportedly confirmed at the command in Bahrain that the vessels are taking apart in the MIO.

10) Maehara: 40-50 DPJ lawmakers think Japan must join war on terrorism

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Appearing on an Asahi Newstar program recorded yesterday, Seiji Maehara, a former president of the Democratic Party of Japan, took the following view about an extension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean: "Quite a few members in our party think Japan must join the war on terrorism. As far as I know, there are 40 to 50 such members." Maehara's comment is likely to create a stir on the back of President Ichiro Ozawa's clear denial of a continued Indian Ocean mission.

Maehara said: "President Ozawa's words carry great significance. When our party endorsed the basic plan (specifying the scale and the duration for the deployment of the SDF), we were not yet merged with the Liberal Party (led by Ozawa). Views have not been sorted out following the merger between the Liberal Party and the DPJ."

About Ozawa's insistence on using a UN Security Council resolution for determining the dispatch of the SDF, Maehara noted: "Opinions in the party have not been worked out. We must discuss (why we are opposed to an extension). Is it because of a lack of information disclosure, constitutional debate, or the interpretation of a UN resolution?"

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11) Next prime minister will not attend UNGA

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Since the presidential election of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will be held on Sept. 23, the next prime minister will not be able to attend a high-level meeting on climate change, which the United Nations will hold on Sept. 24 in New York, as well as the UN General Assembly session starting on the 25th.

This is because the new cabinet will be inaugurated on the 25th at the earliest, after the Diet vote on the prime minister, unless the new LDP president is selected without going through an election.

In that case, the Foreign Ministry will likely arrange a plan to have Ambassador to the UN Yukio Takasu attend the session. The government had looked into the attendance of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since global warming will be a major topic of discussion in the 2008 Group of Eight summit, which Japan will host. However, the ministry conveyed before Sept. 12 when Abe announced his intention to step down to the UN Secretariat that it would be difficult for Abe to attend the sessions.

12) Preliminary skirmish over polling day for LDP presidential race;
Date for election slips to Sept. 23 from initial 19th

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
September 14, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has decided that it will announce today the party presidential election will be held on Sept. 23, even though the party leadership initially intended to hold it at an earlier date. Out of concern about the next House of Representatives election, many lawmakers called for "an open presidential race." The forces that had pushed for a shorter period of time for preparations for the contest to make it advantageous for Secretary General Taro Aso are opposed to the executive's plan. Due to each group's interests, a preliminary skirmish was carried out prior to the official announcement of the presidential election.

"As many lawmakers as possible should run in the election, and candidates should vigorously debate on their policies." "It is necessary for candidates to show the public their differences with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, taking sufficient time." These views were raised in a meeting yesterday of all LDP lawmakers. The dominant view in the meeting was that more time should be provided, opposing the leadership's initial plan to hold the contest on Sept. 19. Some members suggested holding the election on Sept. 25, but the 23rd was selected in the end. Citing the Diet now in session as a reason, there were few LDP members who wanted an early election.

Many LDP lawmakers are still upset with Prime Minister Abe's abrupt announcement of his intention to resign amid the aftermath of the party's humiliating defeat in the July House of Councillors election. The LDP appears to be seeing the presidential race as a good opportunity to attract public attention.

In the presidential election this time, one vote is given to the 387 LDP lawmakers and three votes to the 47 prefectural chapters. Therefore, a total of 528 votes will be cast.

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13) Fukuda likely to win LDP presidency with support from a majority of LDP lawmakers; Fukuda expected to announce his candidacy

MAINICHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
September 14, 2007

Ahead of a presidential election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to choose a successor to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who days before announced his intention to resign, former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda (71) of the Machimura faction yesterday made

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up his mind to run and conveyed this intention to several party officials. Fukuda was critical of the Abe administration for its Asian policy. Fukuda plans to ask for cross-factional support. The largest Machimura faction (with a membership of 80) has now been united to back Fukuda, and a considerable number of lawmakers from the Koga, Yamasaki, and Tanigaki factions are likely to support Fukuda. Garnering support from a majority of party lawmakers, Fukuda immediately has an advantage over other candidates. Meanwhile, Secretary General Taro Aso (66) of the Aso faction pushed back the

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day for him to declare his candidacy from yesterday to today. After much discussion in the party, the LDP decided to announce a presidential election today, accept applications for candidacy tomorrow, and hold an election at a general meeting of the party lawmakers of both the chambers of the Diet on Sept. 23 to choose a new president.

Fukuda indicated his strong enthusiasm for the presidency in the Diet yesterday evening, telling reporters: "Whether to run for presidency is under consideration." In an interview with the Mainichi Shimbun, Fukuda commented: "Many (in the party) have told me to run. I must respond to this call." In the Machimura faction,

to which Fukuda belongs, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori met separately with Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, former Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa, and Fukuda to determine the

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faction's stance ahead of the presidential election. As a result, the faction has decided to back Fukuda. Fukuda is to announce his candidacy possibly today. Fukuda is a six-term lawmaker. His father is the late former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda. In the second Mori cabinet and the Koizumi cabinet, Fukuda served as chief cabinet secretary.

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14) Former Prime Minister Koizumi to back Fukuda in LDP presidential election, saying, "I will spearhead his election campaign."

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Former Prime Minister Koizumi yesterday conveyed to former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa on the phone his intention to support former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, who will run in the LDP presidential race. Regarding Fukuda's candidacy, Koizumi said, "That's good. I will stand at the front in his election campaign." Koizumi told former Prime Minister Mori, "I will 100 percent not run in the race." He thus clarified his determination not to run in the race.

There has now appeared a possibility of Koizumi's decision having an impact on the movements of junior lawmakers who have been seeking his candidacy.

15) Healthcare system in Kantei being called into question, with prime minister's hospitalization

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YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
September 14, 2007

Following Prime Minister Abe's hospitalization yesterday, the healthcare and crisis-management systems in the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) are now being called into question. The government has decided not to appoint an acting prime minister. A government official also said that there is no problem with the crisis-management system. But some government officials voiced apprehension about the systems, one saying: "It is impossible to predict what the effect would be on national politics."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano indicated in a press conference yesterday that there was no problem with the healthcare system to look after the prime minister's health, saying: "The prime minister was keeping tabs on his health through his own doctor. He was properly taking control of his own health."

In April 2000, then Prime Minister Obuchi suffered a stroke in the Kantei and was immediately taken into hospital, but he later died. Set off by this experience, the government started healthcare arrangements in the Kantei. One Self-Defense Force (SDF) medical officer and one nurse are permanently stationed in the medical office in the Kantei so that the prime minister's health is checked on a round-the-clock basis. When the prime minister makes an overseas trip, a medical officer, a nurse, and his doctor usually accompany him.

When Abe made trips abroad, his doctor Toshifumi Hibi, from Keio University Hospital, has gone along with him. Hibi said in a press conference yesterday: "I accompanied the prime minister on his visit to Australia (late last week), but he became extremely weak before leaving the country."

However, because the prime minister announced his resignation while he was in bad physical shape, calls are expected to grow for improving the healthcare system in the Kantei.

16) Malfunctioning Kantei; What happened to crisis management?

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

With the hospitalization of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after suffering from functional gastrointestinal disorder yesterday, the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) is leaderless now. The government has put off important meetings in succession. The political center of Nagatacho and the government office district of Kasumigaseki are now closely watching the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential race, in which Abe's successor will be elected. For all practical purposes, the Kantei has now ceased to function.

At the Kantei, meetings of the senior vice ministers and administrative vice ministers were held yesterday as scheduled. After Abe's hospitalization, no politicians and bureaucrats visited the Kantei.

The government decided yesterday to switch to an informal cabinet meeting from the regular cabinet meeting slated for today. It forwent a meeting planned for today of its blue-ribbon panel on the legal foundation for national security, an advisory panel tasked

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with discussing the right of collective self-defense.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano stressed in a press conference yesterday that the effect of the prime minister's hospitalization would be limited, saying: "We divided meetings into those that should be held even in the prime minister's absence and other meetings that can be put off."

17) Prime Minister's health a delicate issue: Cases that were kept as top secret or not announced at all in the past

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Prime Minister Abe was yesterday admitted to a Tokyo hospital with functional gastrointestinal disorder. The health condition of an incumbent prime minister is politically an extremely delicate issue. In many cases, the fact of hospitalization itself or disease names were not announced officially.

In a recent case, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was hospitalized after a stroke in the early hours of Apr. 2, 2000. The cabinet resigned en masse two days later. Obuchi died on May 14.

On that occasion, the announcement of his hospitalization was suspended for a whole day. Chief Cabinet Secretary Mikio Aoki at the time took office as acting deputy prime minister on the morning of Apr. 3. There was no prime minister in office during this timeframe, raising a question on the crisis management system of the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei).

Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama during a working dinner at the Naples Summit in July 1994 became ill and was hospitalized temporarily. In May 1980, Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira, who was forced to dissolve the Lower House for a general election with the adoption of a no-confidence motion against his cabinet, was hospitalized. He was diagnosed as suffering from irregular heart beat and died of acute cardiac failure while in office. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won a landslide victory in the concurrent Lower and Upper House elections held right after Ohira's death. Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda was hospitalized in September 1964. The name of his disease was precancerous syndrome. He announced his plan to resign the day after the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics in Oct. 1964.

18) Budget compilation likely to be carried over to coming year:
Concern about negative impact on people's lives

SANKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
September 14, 2007

There is concern about a delay in the compilation of the fiscal 2008 budget due to the turmoil caused by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement of his plan to step down. If the turmoil in the political situation continues because of a dissolution of the Lower House, the budget compilation process would come to a halt, causing a delay in the adoption of the budget bill expected to take place at year's end until the coming year. Should that happen, it would be the first time since a similar case happened during the Morihiro Hosokawa cabinet 14 years ago. A delay in the compilation of the budget will have a major impact on people's lives. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) is concerned about the development of the political

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situation.

MOF closed the acceptance of estimated budget requests at the end of August and has started screening those requests for the compilation at year's end. However, there is a mountain of obstacles to the compilation of the budget within the year.

The ruling parties suffered a crushing defeat in the July Upper House election. The Upper House is dominated by the opposition, led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Prime Minister Abe has announced his plan to quit only a month after reshuffling his cabinet. The LDP will hold a presidential election on Sept. 23. A new prime minister is expected to be chosen before the end of this month. However, it is uncertain whether the new prime minister will be able to find a breakthrough in the present political situation, in which the opposition camp controls the Upper House while the ruling bloc holds a majority in the House of Representatives.

19) DPJ's Ozawa making strategic moves on diplomatic front in effort to grab political power

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 14, 2007

Looking askance at the confusion in the ruling camp caused by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement of his resignation, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa is steadily making strategic moves on the diplomatic and security fronts. He met with Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Chairman Jia Qinglin yesterday and stressed that he would make utmost efforts to seize political power, saying: "Japan and China are both at a major turning point." The DPJ has also resumed talks on the issue of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law in preparation for the start of debate with the new administration.

The Ozawa-Jia meeting lasted for about one hour. Ozawa told Jia: "Even after a new prime minister assumes office, the current state of the reversal of strengths between the ruling and opposition parties will remain unchanged. This state will continue at least for three years. Unless we accurately recognize this situation, it will be impossible to implement political administration as desired." He then categorically said: "The Liberal Democratic Party has no capability to completely alter the contradictions in the current political mechanism controlled by the bureaucracy." The meeting was arranged in response to a request from Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wang Yi. Coordination is also underway for Ozawa to meet President Hu Jintao during his planned visit to China in December.

In a meeting of the DPJ foreign and defense committee held yesterday morning, the participants confirmed the party's policy of opposing the government's plan to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The party had asked the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry to submit data covering 42 items related to MSDF activities. In the meeting, it was reported that the government has refused to reply to almost all requests in effect, on the grounds that coordination with the United States is necessary.

The items include: (1) The destinations of and the state of participation in the war by the US naval vessels that were refueled by MSDF; (2) detailed areas in which MSDF refueled various countries' ships; and (3) the possibility of offering other

materials on the occasion of refueling. If the DPJ is unable to receive satisfactory replies, the party plans to invoke its investigative power in national politics.

In the evening, the meeting invited representatives from a non-government organization (NGO) offering medical services in Afghanistan. The participants and the representatives exchanged views on new contribution measures, centering on humanitarian aid, to replace the MSDF mission under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law.

Views in the DPJ have gradually been unified into that of opposing the MSDF refueling, in line with Ozawa's assertion that SDF troops should be dispatched overseas only under a UN resolution. Regarding security policy, intertwined with a revision of the Constitution, views in the party were split. Given this, antagonism may appear in the party in the future.

SCHIEFFER